Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources

Annual Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008

Report DNR 2008–03
December 2008

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1 Accountability Statement

The accountability report of the Department of Natural Resources, for the year ended March 31, 2008, is prepared pursuant to the *Provincial Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the department's business plan information for the fiscal year 2007-08. The reporting of departmental outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by department management and staff.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the management of the Department of Natural Resources. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department's business plan for the year.

Original Signed By
Minister - David M. Morse

Original Signed By
Deputy Minister - Peter C. Underwood

2 Message From The Minister

I am pleased to present the Accountability Report of the Department of Natural Resources, as a summary of the department's activities during the year that ended on March 31, 2008. This is an opportunity for us to provide the public with information on our 2007-08 accomplishments relative to the commitments that were made in our 2007-08 Business Plan.

On behalf of all Nova Scotians, I would like to thank the staff of the department for their efforts throughout the year to deliver departmental programs and services. Our forests, mineral and wildlife resources, the provincial parks system, and our Crown land base are valued components of the province's natural capital. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that they are managed on a sustainable basis.

A highlight of the year was the start of the process to develop a Natural Resources Strategy for the province. The Strategy will be undertaken in three phases and will be completed in 2010. Completion of the Strategy will fulfill one of government's environmental and economic goals included in the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*.

I hope you find the information provided in this report interesting and useful. More information on the many programs and services delivered by the department can be obtained by visiting our website at http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/ .

Sincerely,
David M. Morse
Minister of Natural Resources

3 Introduction

This document reports on the specific priorities and performance measures that were identified in the department's 2007-08 Business Plan. An electronic version of the plan can be accessed at http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/businessplan/default.htm.

The principal responsibility of the department is the management of natural resources (forests, wildlife, minerals, parks) and Crown lands in the province. When reviewing this document, readers should recognize and be aware of several facts.

First, Nova Scotia has one of the lowest proportions of Crown lands of all provinces and territories, at just over a quarter of the province's land mass. Increasingly high public expectations and numerous competing demands for the use of this limited public land and resource base have created ongoing challenges that the department must address in creative and collaborative ways. Although the province has acquired several significant properties in recent years, the fact remains that a relatively small proportion of this province is publicly owned.

Second, as in previous accountability reports, we have provided a caution that the unpredictability of nature is a continuous influence on departmental operations, that weather patterns and climatic conditions vary greatly from year to year, and that this can have a significant impact on departmental priorities and activities, resources and budgets. Forest fires, insect infestations, wildlife and forest health, park attendance, and the state of departmental infrastructure, such as boardwalks and trails, are all affected by the weather and our climate.

Third, due to the location of the majority of our natural resources, the department has a higher profile in the province's rural areas, and a more rural focus. Foundation industries are key contributors to the economic health of the province, particularly in the rural parts of Nova Scotia. There is an ongoing need for the department to heighten public awareness and understanding of the economic importance of our natural resources to both the rural population and the province of Nova Scotia as a whole, and the efforts made by the department to manage our resources in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Fourth, the department is responsible for significant infrastructure, such as parks, trails, fire towers, buildings, vehicles and equipment. It is a continuing challenge to replace and maintain this essential aging infrastructure.

Finally, a three-year process to develop a new strategy governing Nova Scotia's natural resources began in 2007-08. The strategy will include four key components: forests, minerals, parks, and biodiversity (which is the diversity among and within plant and animal

species in an ecosystem). Open and inclusive public consultations will play a critical role in making the process a success.

4 Department Progress and Accomplishments

The department's broad, medium-term goals, that were included in the 2007-08 Business Plan, are listed below. These are to:

- increase awareness and understanding of sound natural resources management principles and practices
- continuously improve departmental strategies for managing natural resources and Crown land
- improve internal departmental planning processes and management systems, and
- improve the department's work environment and the capacity of staff to deliver departmental programs and services.

The following sections report on accomplishments during 2007-08 for each priority listed under the four individual goals provided in department's 2007-08 Business Plan.

4.1 Increase Awareness and Understanding of Sound Natural Resources Management Principles and Practices

4.1.1 Social Marketing

The department examined the way it communicates to both its constituents and the general public. Aspects of the communications process reviewed included: audience awareness/interest in natural resource topics, the perception of department initiatives, audience information requirements, internal communications, as well as existing communications and messaging strategies.

An internal employee survey that was planned for 2007-08 was deemed unnecessary (at this time), given the Public Service Commission's ongoing efforts in this area.

An internal Social Marketing Committee identified 15 areas / topics of focus including increasing public awareness of land ownership in Nova Scotia, the Natural Resources Strategy, an updated website, an off-highway vehicles display, DNR services to the public and new internal communication efforts. The website update was ongoing throughout the year. Exhibit / display materials, featuring information on land ownership in the province and department services to Nova Scotians, were prepared and they were used at various conferences and venues throughout the year.

A number of the department's program and operational staff are in frequent contact with the media. Communications staff provided informal coaching and support to enhance the communications and media skills of these staff members.

A communications strategy has become part of the development of the natural resources strategy and will provide ongoing information and awareness throughout the three year time frame.

Integrated Resource Management (IRM) is the planning and decision-making process used to manage Crown lands administered by the department. The IRM website update began during the year and work on the project will be completed in 2008-09. The layout of the new web pages was completed and visual materials were compiled; technical materials and reference documents will be added in the coming months.

4.2 Continuously Improve Departmental Strategies for Managing Natural Resources

4.2.1 Integrated Resource Management (IRM)

The department defines Integrated Resource Management, or IRM, to be "a planning and decision-making process that involves the coordination of resource management policies, programs and activities so that long-term sustainable benefits are optimized and conflicts among resource users are minimized." An IRM process is used for Crown lands administered by DNR so that we are able to take into account the relationships between the various resource uses and the effects of management practices of one resource upon others.

Integrated resource management includes two major processes. The initial process inventoried special land features, uses and resource values, and incorporated these into databases, which led to the development of goals and objectives for Crown land. Based on the information identified, the land use planning process recognizes and conserves special land features and uses, optimizes long-term sustainable resource values, and minimizes conflicts.

A Long Range Management Framework (LRMF) is an ecologically based land use planning document. Each of the province's ecodistricts will eventually be covered by an LRMF. These frameworks consist of an analysis phase and a design phase.

Approval to proceed with the development of a natural resources strategy led to a decision to postpone work on the procedural guide for ecological landscape design. A plan to complete the ecological landscape design phase of the LRMF development

process for one ecodistrict in the province as a pilot project was also postponed pending the completion of the natural resources strategy. The decisions to postpone work on the guide and on the pilot project were made because it is likely that the outcome of the natural resources strategy will provide new directions that will need to be considered during the design phase of LRMF development.

Work did proceed on the analysis phase of the LRMFs for several ecodistricts. During 2007-08, the analysis phase was completed for the LRMFs of 13 ecodistricts. The analysis phase of the LRMF had already been completed for one ecodistrict prior to 2007-08. At the end of the year work was underway on the LRMFs for several of the remaining ecodistricts and it is expected that most, if not all, ecodistricts will have the analysis phase of their LRMFs completed by the end of 2008-09.

4.2.2 Resource Strategy Development

On May 1, 2007 the Department of Natural Resources announced a three-year process to develop a new strategy governing Nova Scotia's natural resources, for which DNR has oversight. The development of a long-term strategy will address four natural resource components: forests, minerals, parks and biodiversity. The strategy process is divided into three distinct phases:

- Phase I - Public Engagement
- Phase II - Impartial Expert Panels / Stakeholder Engagement
- Phase III - Strategy Development

Voluntary Planning has coordinated the public engagement phase. Much of 2007-08 was spent preparing for these public sessions, which got underway in May 2008.

The development of a natural resources strategy by 2010 is one goal of the *Environment Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* and will help to ensure the sustainability of the province's natural capital while taking steps to seize economic opportunities, and positioning Nova Scotia as a sustainable, competitive society.

4.2.3 Legislative and Policy Framework Improvements

The department has an extensive legislative and policy framework that governs key areas of responsibility with respect to forests, minerals, parks, beaches, trails, wildlife and Crown land. This framework is made up of approximately 30 acts, several hundred regulations, and numerous policies and procedures. This framework must be comprehensive, relevant and up-to-date.

Wildlife management areas and game sanctuaries are covered by specific regulations under the *Wildlife Act*. During 2005, the department conducted both internal and

public reviews of these programs. The public review indicated strong support for retaining all existing areas and for additional proposed areas. The government announced its intention to review the regulations for all areas. The intention of the review is to include clear statements as to the purpose of the designations and specific habitat management measures and/or restrictions in the new and revised regulations.

During 2007-08 the department developed updated regulations for the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park and the Shubenacadie Wildlife Management Area; the boundaries of the Park were also revised. The changes improved the clarity of the previously overlapping designations, facilitating enforcement.

Several other regulations under the *Wildlife Act* were reviewed during 2007-08. The review was based on the results of wildlife populations monitoring, consultations with stakeholders, and feedback from DNR staff and was carried out by an internal committee composed of wildlife managers, enforcement personnel, licencing and legal staff. The results were recommendations for changes to the regulations that provided for the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife.

In June 2007, the department announced recent changes to the Forest Sustainability Regulations under the *Forests Act*. These changes were largely technical in nature and provided landowners with more flexibility in selecting silviculture options. The changes allowed more options for uneven-aged forest management and selection treatments which provided more focus on appropriate tree species when landowners select crop trees to manage. The changes will also help to increase the productivity potential in plantation management.

The department participated in the Provincial Oceans Network initiative, which developed a coastal management framework that laid out various activities to be carried out over the next two years.

The federal government has expressed an interest in divesting itself of the beds of 12 public harbours in Nova Scotia under its Port Divestiture Program. The Province has been negotiating with the Government of Canada for the transfer of the harbour bed of the Strait of Canso to the Province as a pilot initiative. Over the past two years, the department was actively involved in this initiative. In March 2008, a Phase I and II environmental assessment of the Strait of Canso harbour bed was completed.

The provincial and federal governments reached agreement on all key elements of a regulatory regime that will provide clarity to the proponent of the Donkin mine and minimize the risk that litigation might inadvertently impact Nova Scotia's claim to

the offshore. The agreements required legislation at both levels of government. The Provincial Undersea Coal Mines Regulation Act, was passed in April 2007. The Federal Government passed its legislation, *The Donkin Coal Block Development Opportunity Act*, in December 2007. Administrative agreements which set out the operational procedures between governments were completed and have been signed off.

The department participated in an interdepartmental committee that evaluated proposals for the development of a tidal power demonstration facility. The department, along with the Department of Energy, carried out public consultations for the regulatory process for offshore renewable energy projects in support of the Fundy Tidal Energy Strategic Environmental Assessment report. This report was submitted to the Nova Scotia Government by the Offshore Energy Environmental Research Association in early May 2008.

4.2.4 Climate Change Impact Analysis

Climate can be viewed as the average weather over an extended period of time for a given geographic location or region. Weather conditions are measured by parameters such as temperature (high, low and average), precipitation and wind. Climate change can be viewed as a long-term shift in the climate of a specific location. The impacts of climate change in Nova Scotia could result in changes in many climate and weather variables, including maximum and minimum temperatures, season lengths, levels of precipitation, precipitation intensity, a rise in sea level and an increase in the number of intense storms.

A project to examine the potential effects of climate change on tree species distribution in Nova Scotia was initiated in 2007-08. Project funding was provided by the departments of Natural Resources and Energy. The work was carried out by staff in the Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management at the University of New Brunswick, with technical support by department staff and staff from Environment Canada.

There were three main phases to the project. Phase 1 involved the generation of mapped layers depicting current environmental conditions for solar radiation, soil water content and growing degree days at an operational scale (a 70 metre resolution). Phase 2 involved the integration of Nova Scotia climate projections provided by Environment Canada. The projections resulted in the development of time series derivatives for the soil water content and growing degree days mapping layers. Phase 3 involved the interpretation of potential changes to provincial tree species distributions based on estimated change in the soil water content and growing degree day mapping layers. Final results are not yet available, given that additional

work is required in 2008-09 to further refine the methodology and to interpret the results produced by the model.

Project findings will help to allow climate change impacts to be taken into account in the provincial wood supply forecasts, and will support the analysis of climate change impacts in other forest-related areas, such as reforestation, tree improvement, silviculture, fire/insect/disease, wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

4.2.5 Off-highway Vehicles Action Plan Implementation

The government released its Action Plan for Off-highway Vehicles (OHV) in October 2005. The Action Plan includes measures to improve public safety, prevent damage to the environment, protect private property rights, and steps to be taken to provide increased enforcement with respect to OHV issues.

During 2007-08, the OHV General Regulations were amended to help clarify where OHV users can ride. The amendments enabled OHV use on Crown logging roads, k-class roads, and private property designed and accessible for OHV use. The amendments also authorized use on established trails, allowed written permission to be granted through a sign, and grandfathered certain drivers from the requirement for safety training. The OHV Insurance Regulations were developed and implemented that made third party liability insurance mandatory. A Rules and Regulations booklet was also circulated to the public.

Support was provided to the OHV Ministerial Advisory Committee in a number of areas. These areas included administering all transfers to and from the OHV Infrastructure Fund, providing guidance on the expansion of the volunteer-based NS Trail Patrol, developing an OHV Code of Conduct, tracking OHV related fines and warnings, preparing an educational brochure aimed at OHV riders, and staffing a booth at the Atlantic Outdoor and RV show to educate members of the public on safe and responsible OHV use.

Discussions were facilitated with the OHV Ministerial Advisory Committee and members of the OHV Interdepartmental Committee on a number of topics including established trails, Crown land access, abandoned rail lines, community consultation, enforcement and OHV plate and permit policies. The department continued to operate the OHV Enforcement Unit throughout the province, which focused specifically on off-highway vehicle related issues.

Substantial effort was spent on the development of trails available for OHV use. The department worked closely with the Trails Subcommittee of OHV Ministerial Advisory Committee to establish guidelines for the OHV Infrastructure Fund Trails

Program. A number of trail development and maintenance projects were approved throughout the year. These projects received $810,000 from the Fund and, by leveraging private funds, resulted in a total investment in excess of $1.6 million made in trail infrastructure throughout the province. Advice on trail development proposals was provided through the department's Integrated Resources Management process for projects involving Crown land. Staff also worked to resolve community level issues associated with the use of motorized vehicles on trails.

4.2.6 Registry of Mineral and Petroleum Titles Modernization

The Registry of Mineral and Petroleum Titles manages the province's mineral tenure management systems. Functions of the Registry include granting licences and leases to mineral rights applicants, keeping records of mineral rights disposition in the province, issuing licences, leases, notifications, releases and other documents related to the province's mineral tenure system and tracking expenditures reported by mineral rights holders.

Existing processes used by the Registry were primarily paper-based, supported with desk-top software tools, and available to clients only in the Registry office in Halifax. In order to operate efficiently, to comply with the province's move to e-business operations, to properly serve clients, and to be competitive with mineral tenure systems being implemented in other provinces, a significant modernization project was begun in 2006-07. When completed, the Registry system will be a completely digital system, with one key benefit being the provision of map-based remote access to the registry.

The Registry Project Request for Proposals was issued in late 2006-07. In 2007-08, the department initiated the project by awarding a contract for its development and implementation. Work began on the project in early fall 2007. The department dedicated a staff member full time for much of the fall to work on this project.

Phase I consisted of the migration of the existing Registry electronic data repository to a modern, stable open database. Most of 2007-08 was dedicated to defining business rules and translating these into a registry application through software development and testing. The work proceeded on schedule and early versions of the application were reviewed by the steering committee. Plans were made to migrate historical data, and this will be accomplished during 2008.

Phase II consists of the provision of secure, client self-service online map-based claim staking and online payment capabilities. Work on this phase proceeded in 2008-09. Training of department staff and industry clients will proceed when each phase is completed.

4.2.7 Forestry Transition Program

In October 2007 the province announced a new program designed to help the forestry industry cope with a number of factors that were negative influences on the industry. These factors included the appreciation of the Canadian dollar relative to the United States dollar, high energy prices, a sharp drop in housing starts in the United States, and changes in global market conditions that led to mill slowdowns and shutdowns Canada-wide.

The Forestry Transition Program was made up of a number of individual elements. These included:

- land purchases from the forest industry;
- additional funding for silviculture programs;
- funding for the Maritime Lumber Bureau to compensate it for legals costs incurred during the softwood lumber dispute;
- additional funding for the Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia Gas Tax Road Program, which administers a program to fund forest access road construction and maintenance;
- funding for the Forest Safety Society to support safety training programs for companies in the forest industry; and
- the establishment of a select committee of cabinet to work with an advisory group of industry representatives to identify measures that will help the forestry industry to the realities of the changing markets and market conditions.

4.3 Improve Internal Departmental Planning Processes and Management Systems

The department continued to work towards improvements in our internal planning systems and in the collection of information needed to make sound decisions for effective operations and for priority setting.

4.3.1 Business Continuity Planning

Business continuity planning is a pro-active planning process used to ensure the continued availability of essential programs and services in the event of a disruption caused by either humans or nature, and to allow a return to normal operations. A business continuity plan includes: plans, measures and arrangements to ensure the continuous delivery of critical services and products. This plan enables the organization to recover its facilities, data and assets, and to identify the necessary resources to support business continuity, including personnel, information, equipment, financial allocations, legal counsel, infrastructure protection and accommodations.

During the year the focus was on raising the level of awareness of business continuity within the department and starting to instill in staff the value of business continuity planning (developing a culture of business continuity). The other area where significant progress was made was in the collection of information on department programs and activities for use in the development of business resumption plans.

4.3.2 Infrastructure Maintenance and Replacement Planning

The department has an extensive range of infrastructure under its management, including buildings, parks and trails, information technology equipment, vehicles, helicopters and boats. Our infrastructure plays an integral role in achieving departmental goals and objectives within our mandated programs. In addition, the infrastructure is essential for providing effective program management and delivery, and for ensuring that safe workplaces and public facilities are available.

As part of government's capital construction and maintenance program, the department updated its requests for work to be carried out on government owned infrastructure. Updated information was prepared and included in the Buildings Management and Information System application maintained by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. This is a web-based data repository that allows government's capital construction and maintenance related needs to be identified, quantified, and priorized.

4.3.3 Better Regulation Initiative

The Better Regulation Initiative is a government-wide initiative that is intended to make Nova Scotia a more business-friendly location through the reduction and avoidance of red tape. Regulations are often needed to protect society, but they must be done in a way that allows businesses to operate effectively. The quality of regulation is increasingly viewed as a key factor that contributes to business success. Government has committed to a reduction in the paperwork burden for businesses, associated with meeting regulatory requirements, by 20 per cent by the year 2010, while at the same time ensuring that regulations continue to protect the public, the environment, and our communities. One of the department's initiatives mentioned earlier, the modernization of the Registry of Mineral and Petroleum Titles, is expected to make the Registry much more efficient and save businesses a significant amount of time.

Another regulatory improvement was in the *Scalers Act* and the Scaling Regulations. This Act and the regulations relate to the measurement of the amount of primary wood products as they are bought or sold within the forest industry. They were not included in the department's administrative burden index estimate as the Scalers License is considered a personal, occupational license. However, the Act does create a performance requirement for businesses by specifying when and how scaling must be performed.

The previous Act was outdated. In 2001, amendments to the *Scalers Act* were passed but they had not yet been proclaimed, pending development of revised regulations. The amendments and the new Regulations were proclaimed in October 2007. These amendments facilitate the department's ability to keep the Act contemporary with current practice by transferring certain authorities from the statute to the regulations and by establishing a practices manual that will be approved and maintained by the Board of Examiners. The amended Act also relieves the smallest businesses (those using less than 1,000 cubic meters of logs) from the mandatory requirements.

4.3.4 French-language Services Plan

Bill 111, the *French-language Services Act*, was proclaimed in early December of 2004. Regulations were developed which came into effect on December 31, 2006. One requirement of the regulations is the need to develop a French-language services plan annually which describes what activities will be done in the upcoming year related to the provision of French-language services.

During 2007-08 the department participated in the interdepartmental French-language Services Coordinators Committee. The department's main focus for the

year was the translation of documents to French and providing additional French-language material on the department's website. A French-language Services Plan for 2008-09 was also prepared and made available to the public on the website.

4.4 Improve the Department's Work Environment and the Capacity of Staff to Deliver Programs and Services

4.4.1 Human Resources Framework

In response to the survey of staff within government that took place in 2004, as well as to support the Nova Scotia Corporate Human Resources Plan, a Human Resources Framework has been prepared for use in the department (and the other Resources Corporate Services Unit (RCSU) departments and client groups). This is a comprehensive framework that will play a vital role in the achievement of the department's overall strategic goals and objectives. The framework is divided into three sections: recruitment and retention, training and development and occupational health and safety.

A number of initiatives were undertaken during the year that supported the implementation of the human resources framework. These included:

- staff participated in the cross-Canada Recruit Nova Scotia initiative in the Fall of 2007 that promoted awareness of the department as a potential employer.

- the creation of an internal committee to prepare and implement a diversity plan for the department. A review of work underway in other departments was done.

- work on the department's rewards and recognition initiative, which was launched in February 2008. Programs in other provincial departments and in other provinces were reviewed to gather best practices. Work started on the development of questions to be used in an online survey that was planned for DNR's employees in order to solicit their opinion on what form the rewards and recognition program should take. Work also began on the first draft of a departmental rewards and recognition program.

- the development of a framework for an orientation program for department staff. The human resources component of the framework was completed.

- the continued implementation of a healthy workplace initiative with activities such as "lunch and learn" speakers, a weight reduction program in Head Office, and the celebration of Healthy Workplace Week in October 2007.

- work in several areas related to occupational health and safety including starting to review and update the department's procedures to be followed when carrying out potentially hazardous work tasks, improving the operation of workplace safety committees, and preparing for the Violence in the Workplace Regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act coming into effect on April 1, 2008.

The development of department-wide staff training and staffing plans and a professional development strategy have been delayed until 2008-09 as a result of a staff vacancy. These will be part of several career development and talent management activities to be carried out.

5 Financial Results

The department's 2007-08 net program expenditures estimate (after chargeables, fees and recoveries) was $76.902 million. Actual expenditures for the same period were $84.404 million. Most of the additional spending was made as part of the Forestry Transition Program, which was approved by Cabinet in October 2007. More detailed information on the program was provided earlier in the document in Section 4.2.7.

The following table reports the department's revenue, expenditures by branch, tangible capital asset acquisitions, and funded staff. Explanations of significant variations between budget estimates for 2007-08 and the actual figures for the year are also provided.

Department of Natural Resources - Estimated Budget Expenditures *				
	2007-08			
	Estimate ($'000)	Actual ($'000)	Variance ($'000)	Notes
Ordinary Revenues	8,887	8,807		
Net Program Expenses:				
• Senior Management	654	654	0	
• Corporate Services Unit	7,641	7,285	(356)	(1)
• Renewable Resources	10,532	13,951	3,419	(2)
• Mineral Resources	3,496	3,609	113	
• Regional Services	47,126	51,906	4,780	(3)
• Planning Secretariat	4,454	4,305	(149)	
• Land Services	2,999	2,694	(305)	
Total - Net Program Expenses	76,902	84,404	7,502	(4)
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,000	8,269	7,269	(5)
Funded Staff (Full Time Equivalents)	881.1	838.4	(42.7)	

* Note that the cost of services provided through the Resources Corporate Services Unit (financial, human resources, and information technology services) to a number of other government departments and agencies is included in the department's budget.

Notes:

1. Vacancies in funded positions.
2. Reasons for the increase include a one-time payment to the Maritime Lumber Bureau to cover a portion of the legal costs incurred defending the province during the softwood lumber agreement negotiations through the Forestry Transition Program, a grant to Ducks Unlimited, and additional expenditures related to fire fighting and dealing with the brown spruce longhorn beetle infestation.
3. Increase was primarily due to an additional funding for silviculture programs under the Forestry Transition Program, funding for the Gas Tax Program, and a write-off of stumpage fees owed the department by Mactara.

4. Much of the overall increase due to expenditures related to the Forestry Transition Program that was approved by Cabinet in October 2007.
5. Increase was due to purchases of industrial forest land under the Forestry Transition Program and purchases of land with significant coastal, environmental and recreational value.

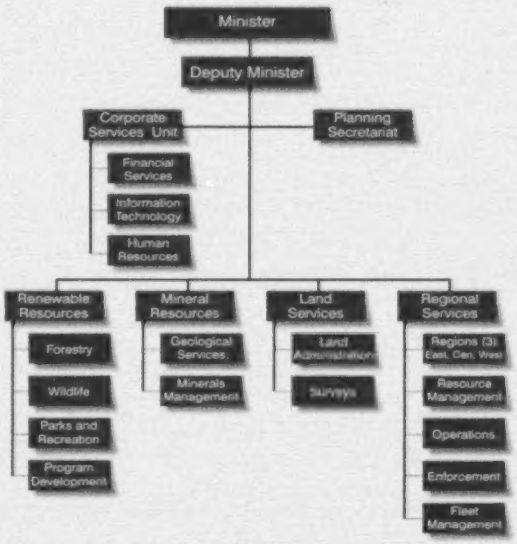
6 Performance Measures

The department has identified a number of performance measures that help track success in meeting our goals. Information on each measure is provided in an appendix to this document. A brief write-up is provided that indicates what each measure tells us, where we are now (2007-08 results), and where we want to be (future target values and target years). The data for each measure is generated within the department.

The department revised its current set of performance measures beginning with the measures that were reported in the 2007-08 Business Plan. There are significantly fewer measures and they are directly aligned with the department's goals, as opposed to the previous set of measures, which were grouped by core business areas.

7 Supplemental Information

During 2007-08, the department had broad responsibilities for the management of forest, mineral, parks and wildlife resources and the management of Crown lands. Nova Scotia's natural resources provide significant economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits for all Nova Scotians and are one of the province's features that make it an attractive place to live, do business in and visit.



The department's organization chart, which was unchanged from 2006-07, is shown to the right. The department consists of five branches, as well as the Resources Corporate Services Unit (RCSU). The RCSU provides financial, human resources and information technology services to the Department of Natural Resources, several other provincial government departments, and a number of agencies, boards and commissions. Note that the Human Resources Division was transferred to the Public Service Commission as of April 1, 2008.

Appendix - 2007-08 Performance Measures

The following pages provide brief explanations of the department's performance measures that were included in the 2007-08 Business Plan. Graphs are also provided for those measures where a graphical presentation of the data is appropriate.

Strategic Goal - Increase Awareness and Understanding of Sound Natural Resources Management Principles and Practices

Outcome - Effective and Efficient Service to the Public

Measure 1 - Level of Public Satisfaction with Overall Performance of the Department
The department periodically includes questions in random public opinion polls to measure Nova Scotians' views on different natural resources related topics. One of these questions asks the public their opinion on the department's overall performance.

What does the measure tell us?
This measure tells us the level of the public's satisfaction with the overall performance of the department. This would cover how well the department is providing the full range of its programs and services.

Where are we now?
The last time the survey was carried out was in 2005-06. At that time, 63% of respondents rated the department's performance as either good or excellent.

Where do we want to be?
We expect that a question will be included to collect the information needed for this measure in a public opinion survey in 2009-10. The target we are hoping to achieve is for 65% or greater of respondents to the survey to rate the department's overall performance as either very good or excellent.

Outcome - Public Awareness of Crown Land Management

Measure 2 - Level of Public Awareness of Process in Place to Manage Crown Land
The department periodically includes questions in random public opinion polls to measure Nova Scotians' awareness and understanding of different natural resources related topics. One of these questions asks the public whether they are aware of the department's process that is used to manage Crown land (the Integrated Resource Management, or IRM, planning process).

What does the measure tell us?
This measure tells us the level of the public's awareness of the process that is in use for the management of Crown lands in the province.

Where are we now?
The last time the survey was carried out was in 2005-06. At that time, 61% of respondents knew that there was a process that was being used to manage Crown lands.

Where do we want to be?
We expect that a question will be included to collect the information needed for this measure in a public opinion survey in 2009-10. The target we are hoping to achieve is for 65% or more of respondents to the survey to be aware that there is a planning process in use to manage our Crown lands.

Outcome - Knowledgeable Teachers and Youth

Measure 3 - Natural Resources Stewardship Training

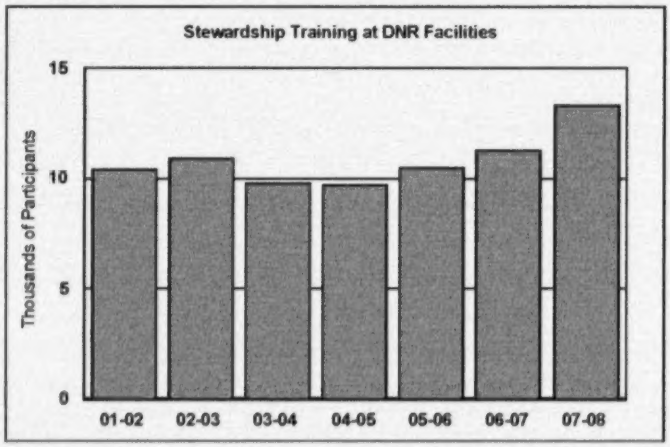
Providing natural resources stewardship training to the public, educators and youth and helping them to understand relevant issues promotes sound natural resources stewardship. It is also important to expose these groups to important stewardship concepts that they may use and pass along to others.

What does the measure tell us?

The measure reflects the number of teachers, adult leaders, students and youth who have participated in one of the natural resources programs at either the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park or the Natural Resources Education Centre (NREC) annually. At the Wildlife Park training is delivered on-site in a classroom in combination with the captive indigenous wildlife at the Park and is an integral part of the provincial science curriculum. The NREC programs involve pre- and post-visit activities as well as interactive activities as part of the visit to the Centre. As a result of the visits and participation in the programs, attendees should gain a heightened understanding of natural resource issues which will contribute to the development of a stewardship ethic.

Where are we now?

During 2007-08, there were 13,355 individuals who participated in training through either the Wildlife Park or the NREC, up 18.4% from the previous year.



Where do we want to be?

The department's target for this measure is 18,000 individuals annually by 2009-10. While a sustained increase in the number of participants is desirable in future years, an increased effort is being placed on reaching teachers, students, youth and youth educators who reside outside of the core service area (which is within a one hour drive of the NREC) through the provision of distance-learning support, in-service training, and outreach activities. There are concerns that increased transportation costs will have a negative impact on the number of visitors to these two facilities.

Strategic Goal - Improve Department Strategies for Managing Natural Resources and Crown Land

Outcome - Effective Management of Resource Supply

Measure 4 - Required Value of Silviculture on Private and Industrial Lands Completed

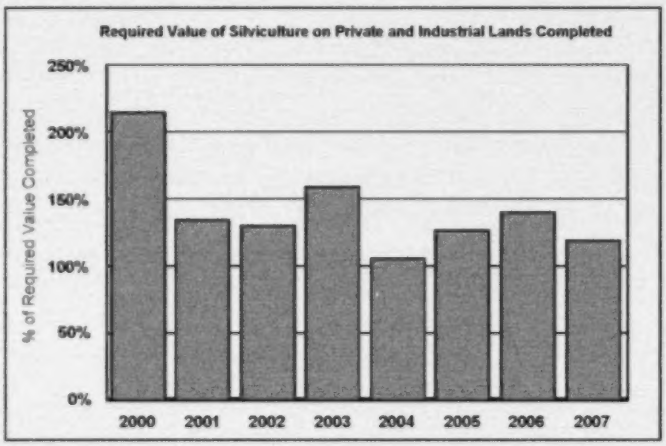
Wood supply sustainability can be managed effectively through an aggressive silviculture program. The department monitors wood harvesting and forecasts long-term wood supply by incorporating both harvesting and silviculture data into the forecast. During the last decade there has been much pressure placed on private woodlots to support the provincial demand for wood. Maintaining an adequate level of silviculture will help to provide for a future supply of wood on private woodlots.

What does this measure tell us?

The measure helps to explain whether the level of silviculture activity being reported by wood buyers exceeds the required amount (as per the requirements of the *Forest Sustainability Regulations*). A ratio of 100% means that the level of silviculture reported equals the amount of silviculture activity required under the *Forest Sustainability Regulations*.

Where are we now?

During the calendar year 2007, approximately 11.9 million silviculture credits were required and about 14.1 million credits were claimed. As a result, completed silviculture was 119% of the amount required under the *Forest Sustainability Regulations*.



Where do we want to be?

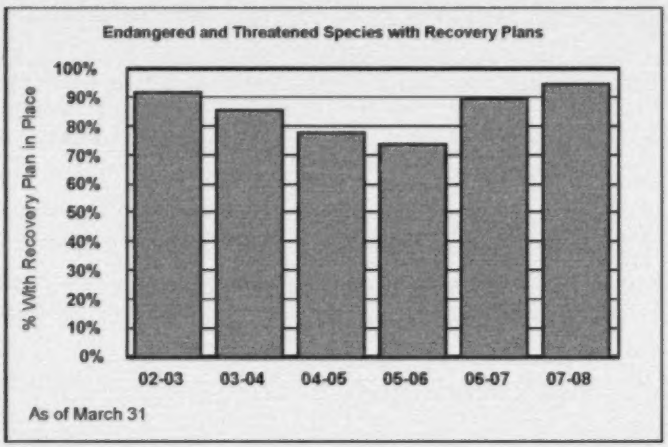
The department's target for this measure for 2007 was 100% or greater (this measure is calculated on a calendar year basis). As long as this measure exceeds 100%, the amount of actual silviculture work being claimed is greater than the amount which is required (under the *Forest Sustainability Regulations*). Each year the target for this measure will remain at 100% or greater.

Outcome - Species Diversity

Measure 5 - Endangered and Threatened Species with Recovery Plans in Place
The department is committed to the conservation and protection of species at risk, provincially and nationally, through the *Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act* and the *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*.

What does the measure tell us?
The measure is an indicator of how much work is being done to restore the health of endangered and threatened species. Recovery plans are the focal instrument for addressing the recovery needs for species at risk and guide governments, recovery teams and others, in their conservation efforts, and are now being prepared as required by the *Endangered Species Act*. Recovery plans establish, for each endangered and threatened species, what needs to be done, how much it will cost, when it will be done and who will do the work. The plans also set goals for what is required to down-list a species at risk and establish a strategy for attaining these goals. To down-list a species means to move it to a lower risk category, such as from endangered to threatened. New species are listed periodically under the *Endangered Species Act*. Recovery plans are required to be in place for each endangered species within one year after the species was listed as being endangered, and within two years for those species listed as being threatened.

Where are we now?
As of March 31, 2008, 24 species were listed as either endangered or threatened. Of these 24 species, 18 of them were required to have a recovery plan in place by March 31, 2008 and 17 of them, or 94%, did have a recovery plan in place as of that date. Information on the province's species at risk can be found on the department's website. The plan for the Eastern Mountain Avens, the only species without a required plan in place, was substantially completed and was going through the approval process in 2008-09.



Where do we want to be?
Our target was to have required recovery plans in place for all (100%) species listed under the Act by 2007-08 or sooner. There is currently one species where a recovery plan is not fully in place. Our target for future years is also 100%. Extra effort is also spent making occasional revisions to completed recovery plans in order to incorporate new information that becomes available.

Outcome - Conservation of Ecosystem Function

Measure 6 - Compliance with the *Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection Regulations*

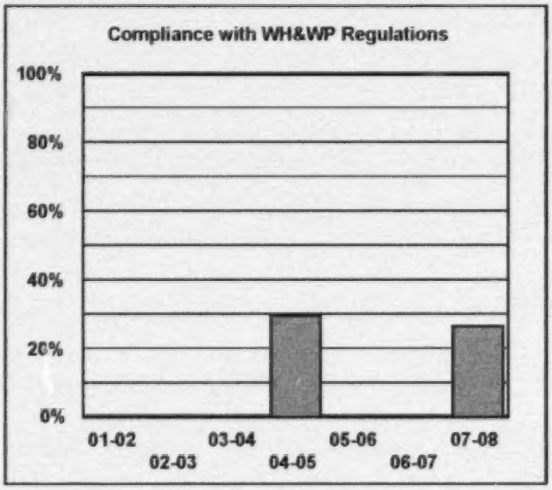
The *Wildlife Habitat and Watercourses Protection Regulations* (under the *Forests Act*) were developed to maintain fish and wildlife habitats and water quality in and near forest harvesting operations on all lands. There are three requirements in the Regulations: reduced harvesting along watercourses in Special Management Zones, clumps of living trees left standing in the harvest site and large pieces of woody debris left evenly scattered over the site.

What does the measure tell us?

The percentage of harvesting operations that meet the legal standards is a measure of how well natural environments are being protected and also a measure of the forest operators' knowledge of the Regulations and their commitment to environmental stewardship. A sample of harvest sites is visited periodically to measure compliance with the Regulations.

Where are we now?

The Regulations became effective on January 14, 2002. Visits to a random sample of sites in 2004-05 (sites harvested shortly after implementation of the regulations) showed 29% in full compliance.



Random monitoring of another 141 harvest sites was carried out in 2007-08. Results showed that approximately 26% of these sites were in full compliance, which was not significantly different statistically from the 2004-05 results achieved (given the margins of error in the results from each survey).

Harvest sites not in full compliance were often in partial compliance with parts of the Regulations, such the inclusion of legacy clumps or providing special management zones (if required). However full compliance was not achieved because the legacy clumps that were left may not have been large enough or included the wrong species of trees while the special management zones may not have been wide enough.

Where do we want to be?

The target for this measure was 90% compliance by 2007-08. The department will continue its attempts to raise the level of compliance by a combination of educational and enforcement activities.

Strategic Goal - Improve Internal Departmental Planning Processes and Management Systems

Outcome - An Effective Organization

Measure 7 - Percent of Employees That Somewhat Agree or Strongly Agree That They Work for an Effective Organization

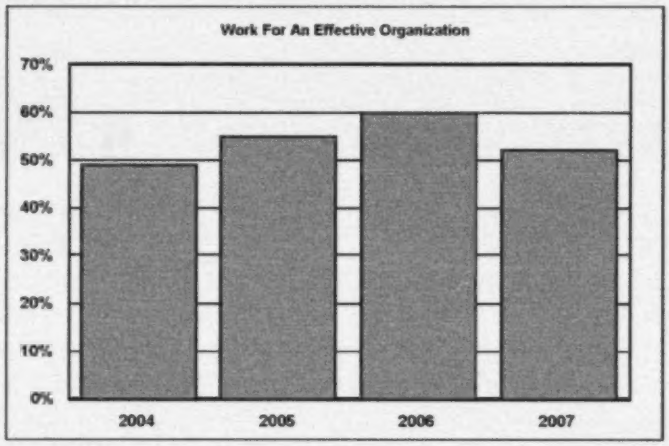
The Public Service Commission surveys employees of the Nova Scotia Government on a regular basis. The 2007 survey was carried out between March 6, 2007 and April 27, 2007. One of the questions in the survey asks whether the employee works for an effective organization.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure reports the estimated percentage of the department's employees (based on the survey results) that gave a favourable response to the question (either they somewhat agreed or they strongly agreed that they work for an effective organization).

Where are we now?

The department's result for this question, from the 2007 survey, was 52%.



Where do we want to be?

The department has set a target of 51% for the results of the 2011 survey (to be reported in the fiscal year the results first become available). We will work to achieve a minimum of 51%, with an expectation to improve on our previous results achieved.

Strategic Goal - Improve the Department's Work Environment and the Capacity of Staff to Deliver Programs and Services

Outcome - Safe Staff and Workplaces

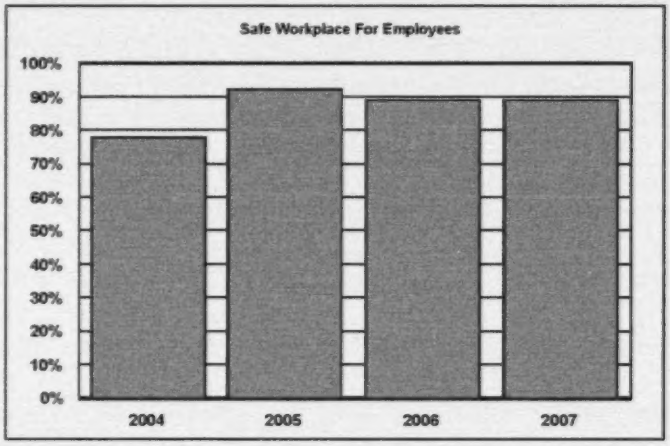
Measure 8 - Percent of Employees That Somewhat Agree or Strongly Agree That The Department Creates a Safe Work Environment

The Public Service Commission surveys employees of the Nova Scotia Government on a regular basis. The 2007 survey was carried out between March 6, 2007 and April 27, 2007. One of the questions in the survey asks whether the department creates a safe work environment for its employees.

What does the measure tell us?
This measure reports the estimated percentage of the department's employees (based on the survey results) that gave a favourable response to the question (either they somewhat agreed or they strongly agreed that the department provides a safe work environment for its employees.

Where are we now?
The department's result for this question, from the 2007 survey, was 89%.

Where do we want to be?
The department has set a target of 80% for the results of the 2011 survey (to be reported in the fiscal year the results first become available). The target set may be considered a minimum level to be achieved in the 2011 survey.



Outcome - Knowledgeable Staff

Measure 9 - Percent of Employees That Somewhat Agree or Strongly Agree That They Have Access to Training Opportunities

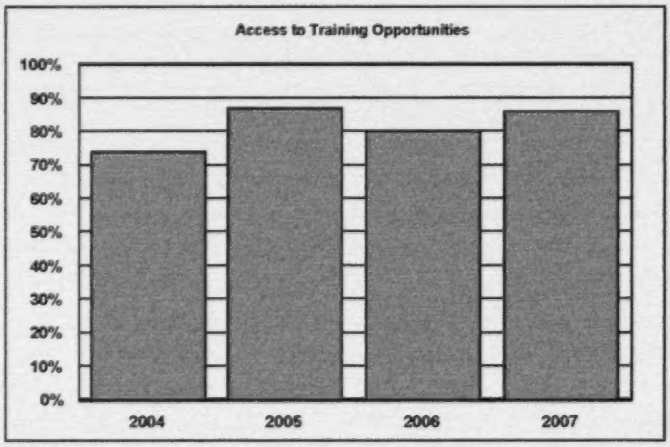
The Public Service Commission surveys employees of the Nova Scotia Government on a regular basis. The 2007 survey was carried out between March 6, 2007 and April 27, 2007. One of the questions in the survey asks whether the employee has access to training opportunities.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure reports the estimated percentage of the department's employees (based on the survey results) that gave a favourable response to the question (either they somewhat agreed or they strongly agreed that they have access to training opportunities).

Where are we now?

The department's result for this question, from the 2007 survey, was 86%.



Where do we want to be?

The department has set a target of 77% for the results of the 2011 survey (to be reported in the fiscal year the results first become available). The target set may be considered a minimum level to be achieved in the 2011 survey.